

**What is claimed is:**

1. A method of categorizing a customer, comprising the steps of:  
selecting a measure on which the status of the customer is to be analyzed;  
selecting a calculation period;  
5 selecting a comparison method;  
computing a lifecycle factor, the lifecycle factor being related to both a size and a growth of the customer according to the selected measure, both the size and growth being determined over two selected calculation periods using the selected comparison method, and  
categorizing the customer by evaluating a plurality of categorization criteria, at least  
10 one of the plurality of categorization criteria including the computed lifecycle factor.
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the measure is selected from a group including number of orders, quantity of purchase and revenue.
3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the calculation period is selected from a group including daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually and yearly.
- 15 4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the comparison method is selected from a group including period over period and year over year by period.
5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the categorizing step assigns a customer to one of a plurality of stages according to which of the plurality of categorization criteria is satisfied.
- 20 6. The method of Claim 5, wherein the plurality of stages includes at least one of New, Growing, Stable, Declining, Defected and Insignificant.
7. The method of Claim 6, wherein the New stage is based upon a date at which an account is established for the customer.

8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of selecting the customer according to at least one of a plurality of customer selection parameters.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein the customer selection parameters include market segment, customer category, operating unit and geography.

5 10. The method of Claim 9, wherein the geography customer selection parameter includes at least one of a plurality of geographical sub-parameters, including area, country, region, state/province and city.

10 11. The method of Claim 8, wherein the customer selection step includes the step of accessing a remote database wherein customer information for a plurality of customers is stored.

12. The method of Claim 11, wherein the accessing step accesses the database over a computer network.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein the computer network includes the Internet.

15 14. The method of Claim 1, wherein the lifecycle factor is computed by determining an absolute value of a difference of the selected measure and by multiplying the determined absolute value with a percentage measure growth of the selected measure, both the difference and the percentage measure growth being determined over two selected periods according to the selected comparison method.

20 15. A computer system configured for categorizing a customer, comprising:  
at least one processor;  
at least one data storage device;  
a plurality of processes spawned by said at least one processor, the processes including processing logic for:

selecting a measure on which the status of the customer is to be analyzed;

selecting a calculation period;

selecting a comparison method;

5 computing a lifecycle factor, the lifecycle factor being related to both a size and a growth of the customer according to the selected measure, both the size and growth being determined over two selected calculation periods using the selected comparison method, and categorizing the customer by evaluating a plurality of categorization criteria, at least one of the plurality of categorization criteria including the computed lifecycle factor.

10 16. The computer system of Claim 15, wherein the measure is selected from a group including number of orders, quantity of purchase and revenue.

17. The computer system of Claim 15, wherein the calculation period is selected from a group including daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually and yearly.

18. The computer system of Claim 15, wherein the comparison method is selected from a group including period over period and year over year by period.

15 19. The computer system of Claim 15, wherein the categorizing step assigns a customer to one of a plurality of stages according to which of the plurality of categorization criteria is satisfied.

20. The computer system of Claim 19, wherein the plurality of stages includes at least one of New, Growing, Stable, Declining, Defected and Insignificant.

20 21. The computer system of Claim 20, wherein the New stage is based upon a date at which an account is established for the customer.

22. The computer system of Claim 15, wherein the processes further include processing logic for selecting the customer according to at least one of a plurality of customer selection parameters.

23. The computer system of Claim 22, wherein the customer selection parameters  
5 include market segment, customer category, operating unit and geography.

24. The computer system of Claim 23, wherein the geography customer selection parameter includes at least one of a plurality of geographical sub-parameters, including area, country, region, state/province and city.

25. The computer system of Claim 22, wherein the customer selection step  
10 includes the step of accessing a remote database wherein customer information for a plurality of customers is stored.

26. The computer system of Claim 25, wherein the accessing step accesses the database over a computer network.

27. The computer system of Claim 26, wherein the computer network includes the  
15 Internet.

28. The computer system of Claim 15, wherein the lifecycle factor is computed by determining an absolute value of a difference of the selected measure and by multiplying the determined absolute value with a percentage measure growth of the selected measure, both the difference and the percentage measure growth being determined over two selected  
20 periods according to the selected comparison method.

29. A machine-readable medium having data stored thereon representing sequences of instructions which, when executed by computing device, causes said computing device to categorize a customer by performing the steps of:

selecting a measure on which the status of the customer is to be analyzed;

selecting a calculation period;

selecting a comparison method;

5 computing a lifecycle factor, the lifecycle factor being related to both a size and a  
growth of the customer according to the selected measure, both the size and growth being  
determined over two selected calculation periods using the selected comparison method, and  
categorizing the customer by evaluating a plurality of categorization criteria, at least  
one of the plurality of categorization criteria including the computed lifecycle factor.

10 30. The medium of Claim 29, wherein the measure is selected from a group  
including number of orders, quantity of purchase and revenue.

31. The medium of Claim 29, wherein the calculation period is selected from a  
group including daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually and yearly.

32. The medium of Claim 29, wherein the comparison method is selected from a  
group including period over period and year over year by period.

15 33. The medium of Claim 29, wherein the categorizing step assigns a customer to  
one of a plurality of stages according to which of the plurality of categorization criteria is  
satisfied.

34. The medium of Claim 33, wherein the plurality of stages includes at least one  
of New, Growing, Stable, Declining, Defected and Insignificant.

20 35. The medium of Claim 34, wherein the New stage is based upon a date at  
which an account is established for the customer.

36. The medium of Claim 29, further comprising the step of selecting the  
customer according to at least one of a plurality of customer selection parameters.

